



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police Remind Residents to Lock Garage Doors *Department Issues Annual Warm Weather Warning*

Howard County Police are reminding citizens to keep their homes secure as the warm weather months approach. Residents are urged to always keep all doors, including garage doors, closed and locked. In addition, doors leading from the garage to the interior of a home also should be secured.

During the warm spring and summer months, police receive an increased number of reports of burglaries from open and unlocked garages and sheds. Residents frequently leave garage doors open while doing yard work or spending time around the house. Burglars often use this opportunity to steal property from the garage or gain access to the interior of the home.

In 2003, police received 126 reports of burglaries from garages and sheds throughout the county. Most crimes of this type were reported in the spring and summer months, with the highest number of cases in June. Through March of this year, police received 35 reports of burglaries from garages. In 77 percent of those incidents, the burglars did not need to use force to gain entry—they walked right in through open or unlocked doors.

In an effort to keep homes and neighborhoods secure, the police department is offering the following tips to residents:

- ?? Always keep all doors, including your garage door, closed and locked. Ensure that the door leading from your garage to the interior of your home also is locked.
- ?? Always lock your vehicles and remove valuable property. Be aware that a garage door opener in an unlocked car is like a key to your home!
- ?? Report suspicious activity or people by calling 911.

Additional crime prevention information is available on the Howard County Police Department's Web site at www.hcpd.org

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